

February 26, 2002

Next Big Thing: Mobile Security Meets Mobile Management

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Question

What is the next “big thing” in mobile computing?

Answer

The next “big thing” in mobile computing will be the combination of mobile management software with mobile security software. Organizations that are attempting to deploy mobile solutions are struggling with various ways to manage and secure mobile deployments. Existing management and security shortcomings must be overcome for mobile solutions to be adopted on a widespread basis.

Currently, organizations deploying mobile solutions must choose from incompatible management and security offerings from different vendors, which are designed to address different needs. For example, an organization may choose to deploy a synchronization solution from **Extended Systems** combined with a secure password and authentication package from **PointSec**. Deploying two solutions that are not integrated will mean that IT managers will have to spend more time actively managing users, applications, devices and security profiles. Management structure changes will not be automatically reflected in security policy updates due to the lack of integration between solutions in the market today. Users moved between groups within an organization will have to be manually reconfigured and new security policies applied using separate management and security consoles. Perhaps the single largest failure evident today is that management software lacks the ability to enforce passwords and strong password usage on mobile devices.

In order to address customer demands, mobile management and synchronization vendors are only now beginning to address security concerns within their management frameworks. However, these vendors have routinely been slow to market with substantive upgrades, and Giga does not anticipate integrated offerings from vendors such as Extended Systems, **Synchrologic**, **Pumatech** or **Aether** until 2003 at the earliest. A number of existing security vendors are also beginning to integrate synchronization and management capabilities into existing mobile security offerings, and there are new vendors on the horizon set to offer all-in-one integrated managed security products. Giga anticipates that at least two offerings from security-focused vendors such as **Credant** will be available by late 2002, which, if successful, could cause a shift in buying patterns away from traditional synch or management-only vendors.

Organizations that cannot justify the cost and labor required to manage separate security and management software for mobile platforms are advised to wait until lower-cost integrated offerings are available before deploying mobile solutions. Organizations that can justify the deployments should choose both a security and management vendor that aligns with an integration strategy and can depict a verifiable road map for future product changes. If possible, organizations should seek commitments from both vendors that product integration will be accomplished within a certain time frame or else a migration to an integrated security and management platform will be required.